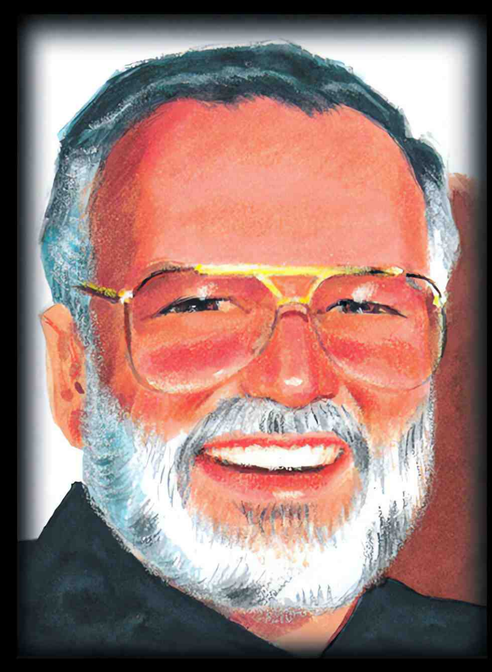
MOON KNIGHT

CITY OF THE DEAD

PEPOSE
FERREIRA
LEISTEN
ROSENBERG

John Romita

1930 – 2023



Marvel mourns the passing of comic-book artist John Romita Sr., whose work on *Amazing Spider-Man* helped make the character a worldwide sensation. In his work as Marvel's art director, he designed the Punisher and Wolverine and served as mentor for countless artists during his decades-long tenure with the company.

Romita had a profound effect on everyone he met at Marvel. He was always kind and warm and served as an inspiration to all who knew him or followed his work. Romita helped build the Marvel Universe as we know it, and he will be greatly missed.

"John Romita Sr. was an incomparable artist who brought so many iconic Marvel characters to life on the page and set the tone and look of Marvel's comics for decades. His version of Spider-Man has inspired so many of us at Marvel Studios. Our thoughts are with his family and the generations of artists and fans who fell in love with the characters he drew."

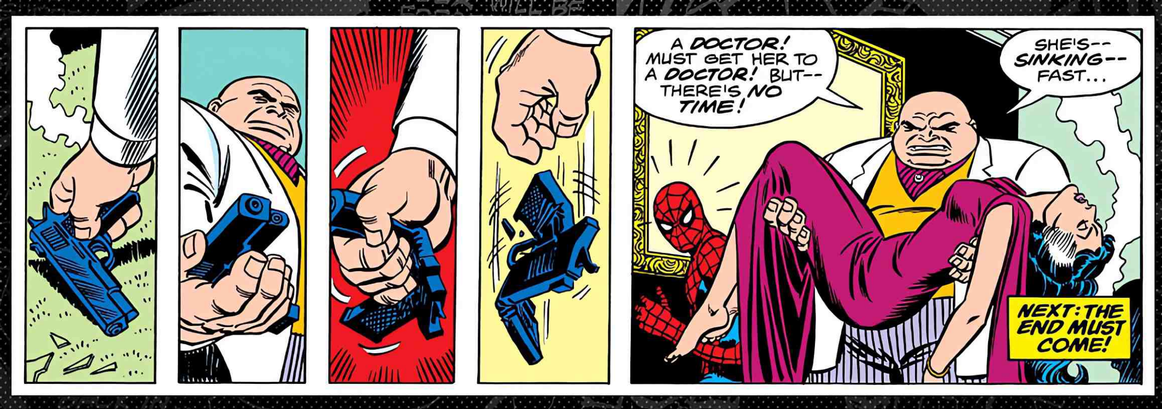
— KEVIN FEIGE

"I was recently able to fawn over some of John Romita Sr.'s original Spider-Man pages, and the word that kept popping into my mind as I marveled over his linework was 'timeless.' His style was such a departure from what had come before, which John did say made him nervous, but one that came to define the look of Peter, Spider-Man, MJ, Gwen and everyone else in their orbit. And the same was true for every Marvel character John designed, penciled and inked. Whether as an artist or art director, John's work influenced generations of comic book artists. With his passing, the comic industry loses a true legend, but just like his artwork, his legacy will remain timeless."

— C.B. CEBULSKI

"When you close your eyes and picture Spider-Man, you're probably picturing a John Romita Sr. Spider-Man. From his debut of the character in *Amazing Spider-Man #39*, the subsequent fifty issues of art, more than a hundred covers and the work he did on the newspaper strip, John defined Spidey for generations of people around the world. That would be enough for anyone else, but John was also an excellent art director, a fantastic father, a doting grandfather and a gentleman. All of us making Spider-Man comics, and Marvel Comics in general, work in his shadow and strive to live up to the example of the legend, Jazzy John Romita."

— NICK LOWE



DECADES OF AMAZING WORK

John Romita wore many hats at Marvel. His most famous contribution was his run on *Amazing Spider-Man*, including the above cover to the series' landmark fiftieth issue. His association with the character would include drawing the cover of the famed wedding of Peter Parker and Mary Jane Watson, *Amazing Spider-Man Annual #21*, seen opposite top right. With Stan Lee, he started the Spider-Man newspaper strip, including the sequence with Kingpin from Sept. 25, 1977, seen opposite center. Behind the scenes, Romita was responsible for designing many of Marvel's most famous characters. At bottom opposite are Romita's costume designs for Black Widow and Wolverine.

"One of the highlights of my career was working with John Romita Sr. I couldn't believe that my 25-year-old self was working and interacting with him, and what made it even better was that he was so considerate and kind – something that has stuck with me ever since, among many other memories with him. It was one of the rare moments where you meet one of your heroes and he exceeds your expectations in every possible way.

His contributions to Marvel's pantheon and culture are immense, and he will be sorely missed. He was a great and kind man who truly made the world a better place. My deepest condolences to Virginia, Johnny and the Romita family."

— DAN BUCKLEY

Mercenary Marc Spector died and was reborn in the shadow of Khonshu, the Egyptian god of the moon. Spector became Moon Knight, the Fist of Khonshu, to fight evil. Through his Midnight Mission, he is the defender of all those who travel at night.

MOON KNIGHT

CITY OF THE DEAD

"HEARTS ON FIRE"

Moon Knight battled the criminal gang known as the Sons of the Jackal. In the midst of the conflict, a young boy named Khalil Nasser was grievously wounded, lapsing into a coma. Moon Knight used mystical means to travel to the City of the Dead to rescue Khalil's spirit. Once there, Moon Knight battled several deceased members of the Sons of the Jackal. A surprising ally came to his aid: Layla El-Faouly, his former lover, now empowered as the Scarlet Scarab.

Elsewhere in the City of the Dead, Khalil is being held captive by the Jackal Knight, who gathered together several of Moon Knight's deceased enemies to form a new Legion of the Unliving!

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"YOU KNOW HE'S GONNA *FIND* ME, RIGHT?"

SO WHATEVER YOUR PLAN IS, I'D START THINKING OF AN EXIT STRATEGY IF I WERE YOU...

'CUZ NO MATTER WHAT YOU THROW AT HIM, ***MISTER KNIGHT*** NEVER STOPS COMING.

THAT'S WHERE YOU'RE WRONG, BOY--FOR THE JACKAL KNIGHT ***WELCOMES*** THE CHALLENGE.

MARC SPECTOR MAY STRIKE FEAR AMONG THE LIVING...

"...BUT HE HOLDS NO DOMINION IN *THE CITY OF THE DEAD.*"

NO MATTER WHO YOU ARE, WE'RE ALL *HAUNTED* IN OUR OWN WAY.

BACK IN OUR MERCENARY DAYS, LAYLA USED TO TELL ME THE PAST WOULD CATCH UP WITH US EVENTUALLY.

WHILE WE DIDN'T ALWAYS FIGHT ON THE SAME SIDE, SHE WAS RIGHT ABOUT *ONE* THING...

...NOBODY OUTRUNS THEIR *SHADOWS* FOREVER.

YET EVER SINCE I LOST HER, LAYLA'S MEMORY HAS CLUNG TO ME LIKE A *SHROUD.*

DROWNING ME IN THE DEPTHS OF *ENDLESS REGRET.*

BUT KHONSHU'S MISSION HAS TAKEN ME FAR BEYOND THE *LAND OF THE LIVING.*

AND MUCH TO MY SURPRISE--I FIND MYSELF FACING MY *GHOSTS* ONCE AGAIN.

DON'T BOTHER LYING TO US, RAMSES...

SHE CALLS HERSELF THE *SCARLET SCARAB* NOW--PROTECTOR OF THE CITY OF THE DEAD.

WE'VE SPENT ALL NIGHT SHAKING DOWN YOUR MEN.

IT STILL FEELS SO INCREDIBLE TO ME--SEEING LAYLA AFTER ALL THESE YEARS.

AND TRUST ME--YOU DON'T WANT TO GET ON MY FRIEND *MOON KNIGHT'S* BAD SIDE.

TIME TO START TALKING, PHARAOH--WHERE'S THE BOY?

I DUNNO ANYTHING ABOUT NO KIDS, MOON PRIEST.

BUT IF YOU'RE STUPID ENOUGH TO PAY A VISIT TO *THE DUAT*...

SNAPP!

...PERHAPS MY USHABTI CAN MAKE YOU A MORE *PERMANENT* RESIDENT!

CH-CHAK

THAT'S THE PROBLEM WITH LETTING YOUR EMOTIONS RUN ROUGHSHOD...

...IT ALWAYS LEAVES YOU *VULNERABLE.*

LAYLA-- GET DOWN!

HEARTS ON FIRE

BEFORE HE SENT ME HERE, DR. BADR TOLD ME THIS REALM WAS *PSYCHOACTIVE*-- SHAPED BY THE CONTENTS OF ONE'S HEART.

SPAKK

KRAKT

SPANGG

BUT THEN I REMEMBER *KHALIL*--HOW THE SONS OF THE JACKAL LEFT HIM TO DIE IN THE STREETS...

...AND IT BECOMES THAT MUCH *HARDER* TO KEEP MY THOUGHTS IN CHECK.

KRAKOOM

STUPID, MARC-- LEFT YOURSELF WIDE OPEN...

NNF...

NO--NOT HIM... NOT *DOCTOR ALRAUNE!*

REALITY SNAPS BACK WITH THE ROAR OF A MACHINE GUN--BUT I'VE GOT A *GUARDIAN ANGEL* WATCHING OVER ME.

BRAKKA

BRAKKA BRAKKA

BRAKKA BRAKKA

MARC--GET YOUR HEAD IN THE GAME!

THE ROOM SHIFTS LIKE A *KALEIDOSCOPE*--IS THIS LAYLA'S DOING...?

GOTTA SAY--THAT'S A NEAT TRICK, LADY.

INTERESTING--HOW FAR IS THE SCARAB'S REACH?

I'VE NEVER TESTED THE LIMITS BEFORE--MAYBE TEN, TWENTY FEET?

GOOD--THEN TRY TO KEEP UP...

CONSIDER IT A PERK OF THE JOB--I CAN ALTER THE CITY'S ARCHITECTURE IN A PINCH.

"...BECAUSE I INTEND TO TAKE A MORE *HANDS-ON* APPROACH."

KEEP SEARCHING FOR THEM--THEY COULDN'T HAVE GOTTEN FAR!

WE MOVE WITH PRECISION, FALLING BACK INTO OLD RHYTHMS AS IF IT WAS YESTERDAY.

GRNN--!

IT SOUNDS CRAZY WHEN YOU SAY IT OUT LOUD--MARC SPECTOR AND LAYLA EL-FAOULY, *STAR-CROSSED SOLDIERS FOR HIRE.*

WHERE--?

BUT SHE UNDERSTOOD ME IN A WAY NOBODY ELSE HAS... NOT EVEN *KHONSHU* HIMSELF.

KRAATCH

SHE UNDERSTANDS THAT DEEP DOWN, WE'VE ALL GOT SOMETHING TO ATONE FOR...

SHE *WARNED* YOU NOT TO GET ON MY BAD SIDE...

...EVEN IF IT MEANS LAYING DOWN OUR LIVES TO DO IT.

AH WELL-- IT'S *YOUR FUNERAL.*

I'VE GOT TO HAND IT TO RAMSES--HE SPARED NO EXPENSE FOR PROTECTION.

C'MON-- GOTTA GET AWAY FROM THAT FREAK!

GAHH--!

BUT THAT'S THE DANGER OF RELYING ON BODYGUARDS.

NO, NO, NO...

MY USHABTI!

WHUDD

THEY'RE ALL BARK AND NO *BITE.*

NOW LET'S TRY THIS ONE LAST TIME-- ***WHERE'S KHALIL?***

Y-YOU'RE BLUFFING--I'M ALREADY ***DEAD,*** PAL!

NOTHING 'SIDES ***THE DEVOURER HERSELF*** CAN PUNCH MY TICKET!

MAYBE YOU'RE RIGHT, RAMSES--BUT THERE ARE FATES ***FAR WORSE*** THAN DEATH.

NOW THAT'S AN IDEA--HOW'D YOU LIKE TO SPEND ETERNITY WITH YOUR ***FACE*** CUT OFF?

A-ALL RIGHT--ALL RIGHT! I GIVE, I ***GIVE!***

ALL I KNOW IS--SOMETHIN'S GOIN' DOWN AT ***THE DOCKS!***

THE SHIPYARD OF MESEKTET, TO BE EXACT--WHERE FLYING BARGES FILLED WITH LOST SOULS COME FOR HARBOR.

WITH ITS SPRAWLING MAZE OF WAREHOUSES, IT'S THE PERFECT PLACE TO HIDE--UNLESS YOU HAVE THE PROPER VANTAGE POINT.

IT'S STRANGE HOW NICE THIS FEELS--DOESN'T THIS REMIND YOU OF THAT EXTRACTION JOB WE DID IN *DAMASCUS?*

YOU'RE THINKING OF BOTSWANA--DAMASCUS IS WHERE I GOT *TORTURED* FOR A WEEK.

NOW IF YOU REALLY WANTED ME TO TRUST YOU, YOU COULD TELL ME HOW YOU GOT THAT *SCARAB* AROUND YOUR NECK...

THAT'S *MY* BUSINESS--DID I EVER QUESTION YOU ABOUT YOUR *D.I.D.?* OR WHY YOU'VE STARTED DRESSING UP LIKE A *GHOST?*

I CAUGHT THE WRONG BULLET--AND THEN *THE WILL OF KHONSHU* BROUGHT ME BACK.

NOW STOP AVOIDING THE QUESTION--WHAT HAPPENED TO YOU?

THAT'S THE REAL QUESTION, MARC--ARE YOU ASKING ABOUT WHEN *I DIED...*

...OR WHAT HAPPENED TO ME *AFTER?*

"MY GRANDFATHER WAS A TRUE BELIEVER--ONE OF THE LEADING SCHOLARS AT THE ***EGYPTIAN MUSEUM*** IN CAIRO.

"WHEN I WAS A CHILD, HE WOULD REGALE ME WITH STORIES OF ***THE DUAT***...

"BUT IT WASN'T UNTIL ***SOMALIA*** THAT I LEARNED THE MYTHS WERE ALL TRUE.

"WHEN I FIRST ARRIVED IN THE CITY, MY HEART WAS WEIGHED UPON THE ***SCALES OF JUSTICE.***

"BUT I'VE BEEN ON THE WRONG SIDE OF MANY WARS--AND I FEARED I WOULD BECOME ***AMMUT THE DEVOURER'S*** NEXT MEAL.

"YET MUCH TO THE GODS' AMAZEMENT...MY HEART WAS IN ***PERFECT BALANCE.***

"IT WAS THE GREAT ***TAWERET*** WHO BELIEVED THAT I STILL HAD UNFINISHED BUSINESS.

"SHE OFFERED ME THE CHANCE TO PRESERVE BALANCE AS THE GUARDIAN OF THE DUAT...

"...TO BE GIVEN THE POWER OF THE ***SCARLET SCARAB.***"

ONLY THESE DAYS, I WONDER IF I MADE THE RIGHT CHOICE.

NO ONE'S SEEN OSIRIS OUTSIDE HIS PALACE IN AGES--AND EVERY DAY, SCUM LIKE RAMSES ESCAPE *THE SCALES OF JUSTICE.*

I CAN HEAR THE GRIEF IN HER VOICE--SHE'S BEEN *ALONE* FOR SO LONG.

IF IT MEANS ANYTHING, LAYLA... I'M SO SORRY I COULDN'T SAVE YOU.

...ARE YOU?

IF SHE ONLY KNEW HOW MUCH I'VE *MISSED* HER...

...SHE'D REALIZE SHE'S NOT THE ONLY ONE WITH *UNFINISHED BUSINESS.*

I WANT TO BELIEVE--THAT EVEN MERCS LIKE US CAN HAVE A HAPPY ENDING...

MARC, I--

...BUT IF ONE THING IS STILL THE SAME BETWEEN US...IT'S THAT *THE JOB* COMES FIRST.

RRRRNNNNNNNN

LOOK--IT'S ONE OF THE USHABTI!

AND HE'S LUGGING SOMETHING *BIG* BEHIND HIM--LET'S SEE WHERE HE'S HEADED...

IT'S BEEN *TWELVE HOURS* SINCE I BROUGHT KHALIL TO BADR'S CLINIC.

BUT WITHOUT HIS *SOUL*, THERE'S NO TELLING HOW LONG THE BOY'S *PHYSICAL BODY* WILL SURVIVE.

WHICH MEANS THERE'S NO TIME TO PLAY THIS *SUBTLE*.

THAT'S SOME GRIM CARGO YOU'RE CARRYING, MONSTER.

HOPE YOU DON'T MIND IF WE TAKE IT OFF YOUR HANDS!

THRAK

MY HEART POUNDS AS I PULL THE LID FROM THE SARCOPHAGUS...

PLEASE, GOD-- LET KHALIL STILL BE ALIVE...

BUT THEN I REMEMBER WHAT LAYLA SAID--HOW THERE ARE SOME THINGS FAR *WORSE* THAN DEATH.

NO.

PL-PLEASE, MISTER--YOU G-GOTTA HELP ME...

TH-THE JACKALS... TH-THEY TOOK MY HEART.

MY MIND REELS IN HORROR--NOT BECAUSE OF THE *SHEER CRUELTY* ON DISPLAY...

LAYLA-- IT'S NOT *HIM*...

STAY WITH THE BOY, MARC-- I'LL SHED SOME LIGHT FOR US...

...IT'S THAT KHALIL WASN'T THE ONLY ONE TAKEN BY THE JACKALS-- JUST THE LATEST.

OH GOD.

MARC-- THERE ARE SO MANY CAGES...

"ALL THESE CHILDREN-- WHAT ARE WE SUPPOSED TO DO?"

DEEP INSIDE, I CAN FEEL THE WRATH OF KHONSHU THREATENING TO BOIL OVER.

FIRST, WE FREE THE VICTIMS--AND THEN WE PUT THE BASTARD WHO DID THIS INTO THE GROUND.

I DON'T UNDERSTAND--WHAT DO THE JACKALS WANT WITH A GROUP OF *GRADE-SCHOOLERS?*

FOR HE BROUGHT ME BACK AS THE TRAVELER, THE PATHFINDER, THE EMBRACER...

LOOK AROUND--THE SCALPELS, THE IDENTICAL HOLLOWED-OUT CHESTS...

YOU WANTED TO KNOW HOW CRIMINALS LIKE RAMSES KEEP ESCAPING THE SCALES OF JUSTICE?

...THE DEFENDER OF THOSE WHO TRAVEL AT NIGHT.

THEY'RE USING THE HEARTS OF CHILDREN TO DO IT.

AND NO MATTER WHERE IT LEADS ME...*MY MISSION DOES NOT CHANGE.*

STAND BACK-- WE'RE GONNA GET YOU KIDS OUT OF HERE!

RRRNK

BECAUSE I'M STILL HAUNTED BY ALL THE THINGS I'VE DONE OVER THE YEARS...

WELL, LOOK AT THIS--MOON KNIGHT, STILL IN FIGHTING FORM...

...JUST WAITING FOR THE DAY MY SINS FINALLY CATCH UP WITH ME.

BUT THAT'S ALL RIGHT--WE DON'T MIND...

...'CAUSE WE'VE BEEN *DYING* TO GET A PIECE OF YOU!

THE PAST BEARS DOWN UPON ME LIKE A *FREIGHT TRAIN...*

...AS I FACE DOWN A *MOB OF KILLERS* I'D LAST SEEN IN THE MORGUE.

LAYLA-- THE KIDS!

ON IT-- BUILDING AN *ESCAPE TUNNEL* FOR THEM NOW!

WHOEVER'S BEHIND THIS, THEY KNOW ME INSIDE AND OUT...

...NOT JUST AS *MOON KNIGHT*... BUT AS MARC SPECTOR TOO.

KZZRAAAP

NYAARRGH!

THEY KNOW THAT EVERY NIGHT, I CAN STILL SEE MY ENEMIES' FACES.

LIKE *MASTER SNIPER*--WHO I LET PERISH IN AN AVALANCHE.

TAURUS--I WATCHED HIM DIE IN A PLANE CRASH.

THRAKK

WE'VE WAITED A LONG TIME FOR THIS, MOON KNIGHT!

BLACK SPECTRE-- THREW HIM OFF A BUILDING.

RRRR-- KILL YOU!

SHRAKT

MIDNIGHT-- STABBED HIM TO DEATH WITH A CLOCK-TOWER HAND.

NO-- HE'S MINE, DAMMIT!

VRRRRR

CHAINSAW--DROPPED A SHIPPING CONTAINER ON HIM.

NOW, NOW, BOYS.

THERE'S PLENTY OF HIM FOR US TO SHARE.

FROOOSH

PLASMA--LEFT HER TO DIE IN A SUBWAY COLLISION.

THERE'S JUST ONE CHANCE--CAN'T FIGHT THEM ALL OFF AT ONCE...

SNAP

RRRAAAGH!

I REACH OUT TO MY *GUARDIAN ANGEL* FOR PROTECTION...

LAYLA--PLEASE--!

I'M SORRY, MARC...

...AND THAT'S WHEN I DISCOVER HOW ALONE I TRULY AM DOWN HERE.

...I WISH I COULD HAVE SAVED *YOU* TOO.

BUT THAT'S THE DANGER OF LETTING YOUR EMOTIONS RUN AWAY WITH YOU.

TURNS OUT YOU WERE RIGHT...

...THIS REALLY *WAS* LIKE DAMASCUS AFTER ALL.

SOMEBODY'S ALWAYS BOUND TO GET *HURT.*

TIME PASSES.

THE PAIN DOESN'T SCARE ME--IT *NEVER* HAS.

NEITHER DOES WAKING UP IN THE LION'S DEN, SURROUNDED BY MY *WORST ENEMIES.*

NNFF-- WHERE AM I?

BUT THE THING THAT SCARES ME THE MOST ISN'T THE KILLERS THAT I RECOGNIZE...

AH, GOOD-- THE *GUEST OF HONOR* FINALLY AWAKENS.

I WAS WONDERING HOW LONG I'D WAIT BEFORE WE FACED EACH OTHER AGAIN...

...IT'S THE *ONE FACE* THAT WAS MADE CONSPICUOUS BY ITS ABSENCE.

LAYLA WAS RIGHT--I HAVE *UNFINISHED BUSINESS* IN THE CITY OF THE DEAD...

YET AFTER WHAT I'VE ENDURED-- YOU CAN HARDLY BLAME ME FOR BEING *IMPATIENT,* CAN YOU?

...THAT IS... ASSUMING IT DOESN'T FINISH *ME* OFF FIRST.

WHAT'S THE MATTER, MARC...

...NO WARM GREETING FOR YOUR LATE BROTHER *RANDALL?*

NEXT: THE NIGHT OF THE JACKAL!

NEXT:

MOON KNIGHT

CITY OF THE DEAD